

religious persecution, are synonymous terms,—if not in expression, at least in effect. But I should like to know, how these “penances, rigid penances,” as he calls them, can be made out a religious persecution? We find, as I have already remarked in my former communication, sufficient scriptural authority to justify us on that point, as well as on all others that tend to salvation. The Ninivites did penance by fasting and prayer, Moses fasted and prayed, Elias fasted and prayed, and Christ himself fasted and prayed to his heavenly father, forty days in the desert, and St. Paul says, “that you may give yourselves to fasting and prayer.” Now since penance is an apostolical institution, I cannot see why it should be taxed as a “religious persecution.” Is it because imposed by a priest? not a self-styled, self-commissioned, and self-made orthodox priest, but a priest receiving his authority from the successors of St. Peter, as St. Peter did from Christ, on the day of his resurrection, when he said, “As my father hath sent me, so I send you. And when he had said this, he breathed on them, and said to them, receive ye the Holy Ghost; whose sins you remit, they are remitted: and whose sins soever you retain, they are retained.—John XX. 21. 22. 23. Again at the lake of Tiberias, he tells Peter, “Feed my lambs, feed my sheep.”—John XXI verses 15, 16 17. And again he said “Thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.” St. Matt. XVI. verse 18. Again he says to his church, “Behold I am with you all days, even to the end of the world.”—Matt. XXVIII. verse 20. If these proofs are not a quantum sufficit to justify the Catholic Church in her practices, and convince this spectator,—he and such protestants as profess a similar belief, must either deny the authenticity of God’s word, and pronounce it in his own language, “a chimera.”—“the baseless fabric of a vision,” or else they must admit their own error, and if not, undergo the judgement already pronounced against all disbelievers.

I have perused many dictionaries, but never, till informed by this spectator, knew, that “penance and “religious persecution,” were synonymous. What a pity that the American money-raising orthodoxy, did not give this spectator the appointment and title, of *Lexicographer-general-of-new-invented-ideas-to-old-words-to-hammer-down-popery*, and doubtless such a compilation as this, would excite the admiration of the newly converted Orthodox Indians, who perhaps, would, liberally patronize it, and on discovering its author, exclaim

“Oh! with what laurels shall thy head be crown’d,  
A grove—a forest—shall thy ears surround.”

But in order to stop future unfounded assertions of such malicious and begottd opponents, I will leave you and the Indians to speculate on your appointment, whilst I direct my attention to a definition of “PENANCE,” as believed; and professed by Catholics.—“We believe, that when a sinner repents of his sins, from the bottom of his heart, and acknowledges his transgressions to God and his minister the dispensers of the mysteries of

Christ, resolving to turn from his evil ways, and bring forth fruits worthy of penance; there is then, and no otherwise, an authority left by Christ, to absolve such a penitent sinner from his sins: which authority, we believe, Christ gave to his Apostles and their successors, the bishops and priests of his Church, in those words when he said: Receive ye the Holy Ghost, whose sins you shall forgive, they are forgiven.

“Though no creature whatsoever can make condign satisfaction, either for the guilt of sin, or the pain eternal due to it: this satisfaction being proper to Christ our Saviour only: yet, penitent sinners, redeemed by Christ, may, as members of Christ, in some measure satisfy by prayer, fasting, alms-deeds, and other works of piety, for the temporal pain, which in the order of divine justice sometimes remains due, after the guilt of sin and pains eternal have been remitted. Such penitential works, are notwithstanding, no otherwise satisfactory than as joined and applied to that satisfaction, which Jesus made upon the cross in virtue of which alone, all our good works find a grateful acceptance in the sight of God.

“The guilt of sin or pain eternal due to it, is never remitted by what Catholics call indulgences; but only such temporal punishments as remain due after the guilt is remitted:—these indulgences being nothing else than a mitigation or relaxation, upon just causes, of canonical penances, enjoined by the pastors of the church on penitent sinners, according to their several degrees of demerit.”

The above quoted principles of Catholics, relative to “penances” and “indulgences,” are from the pen of an Irish Catholic priest, who experienced the effects of “religious persecution” not such persecution as the Spectator has described, when he thus sympathizingly says and if the priests who impose such things, had the smallest particle of right feeling they would blush to think of making their fellow creatures, who might otherwise be ornaments to true religion, thus degrade themselves below the level of the brute.” But listen Spectator, to what I call “religious persecution,” neither “persecution” of fasting or prayer, but “persecution,” as inflicted on the Revd. James Corker, a Benedictine monk, author of Catholic principles, in reference to God and the king from which the above is a quotation. “On the 17th of January, 1680, he was brought to the bar, at the old Bailey, and indicted for high treason, on the 27th of Elizabeth,” for that being born within the king’s dominions and made a priest, by authority from the See of Rome, he did traitorously come and abide in England, contrary to law.” Of this charge the Jury found him guilty, and the Recorder condemned him “to be conveyed on hurdles to the place of execution: to be there hanged by the neck; to be cut down alive; to have his bowels taken out and be burnt in his view—his head to be severed from his body: and his body to be divided into four quarters, to be disposed of at the king’s pleasure.” See Cobbett’s state trials, vol. 7 page 845. And what was the charge alleged to this priest, (whose name I would never introduce, was I not

obliged to quote from him in order to shew the principles of Catholics relating to penance?) for merely crossing over from Ireland to England!!!—Are not these more like deeds emanating from the “man of sin,” than any thing we have ever read of emanating from a “pope?” Could Antichrist himself, who you would fain represent the pope to be, do more than this?! and still you will talk of the simple “penances” imposed by priests as a “religious persecution.” I hope you are satisfied. from what is already defined in the foregoing quotation from Catholic principles, “that the rich cannot pay the poor to do penance for them, as lyingly asserted by the spectator. I hope he is now convinced, that Catholics in the performance of “penance,” are actuated by the same means the repenting Ninivites were; and not by “a belief in its intrinsic and meretricious efficacy,” as he asserts.

But the spectator says, “it is no uncommon thing, in passing through the south and other parts of Ireland,” to see people going through the most degrading penances, such as going round the stumps of old trees on their bare knees,” as he says he himself has seen “the earth actually worn hollow” in this way. Still this does not assimilate them to “the devotees of Juggernaut,” as he makes the comparison. In worshipping a Juggernaut, the devotion is directed to a human fabricated mass, somewhat like the Trojan paladium, but the Catholics is directed to the living God, whose pardon they invoke through Christ. If the Spectator had drawn the comparison, between the devotees of king William the third, prostrating themselves before his statute in some lodge, with bended knees and uncovered heads, drinking the “glorious and immortal memory,” the comparison would appear more just: they prostrate themselves to a human fabricated image, and so do the devotees of Juggernaut. Catholics in the south of Ireland, perhaps in passing by some tree planted, to render more memorable the spot where some saint has been deposited, stop by his sacred shrine, to offer up a prayer for some deceased relative or friend, who perhaps rests close by, or invoke the saints intercession with Christ for their own sinful souls, does all this look like the worshipping of a juggernaut? Is it because they have no church there? But perhaps they would have had, had not the iron-hand of “persecution” long since destroyed it.—But Christ had no church in the garden when he prayed to his heavenly father for us, and would it not be blasphemy for a protestant to think he “degraded” himself “below the level of the brute,” as the spectator says of the Irish Catholics.

But since my communication has already become so lengthily, I will let the Spectator accuse himself with the story of St. Paul’s apron, before I can give him any information respecting St. Bredget’s arm. Now, as to “Catholics differing frequently from one another,” the charge is false. Illiterate or ignorant Catholics, may not be so intelligent in points of religion, which is their own faults, as their pastors are always ready to give them the necessary information on all doubtful matters.